

Application No.: 10/659,274
Inventor: Nakanishi et al.
Amendment of Nov. 18, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Aug. 31, 2003
Docket No.: 10038

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to include the limitations that the contact holder is provided on and around the neck section.

Claim 4 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 USC §102 as being anticipated by Nakayama (US 5,897,315). More specifically, the Examiner asserts that Nakayama discloses a dental unit capable of measuring a root canal length with a head section, a sleeve capable of rotation for holding a cutting tool, and a neck section for attachment to a hand piece. The Examiner further asserts that there is also a contact providing an electric connection with, and capable of detachably contacting, the cutting tool. The Examiner also asserts that the contact is made up of two rods on opposite sides of the lead element which disengagably holds the cutting tool therebetween. The Examiner also asserts that the contact connects with a contact holder assembly near the neck section that is able to slide with respect to the neck section and the holder has a lead attachment for connecting lead to contact and root canal measuring device. The Examiner further asserts that Nakayama also shows the lead attachment of the contact holder being a hole through which the lead is connected, via contact pin and jack.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection inasmuch as the rejection may apply to the claims as amended.

A patentable feature of the present invention resides in the contact holder (12). More specifically, the contact holder (12) according to the present invention is fixed to the proximal end of the contact (11):

(A) is axially slidable with respect to a neck section (10A) of the dental head unit (10),

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- (B) has a lead attachment (12d) to which a lead (32) is detachably attached, and
- (C) is provided on and around the neck section (10A)

With the above features (A) and (C), operation of the contact (11) fixed to the contact holder (12) is remarkably facilitated, and the contact (11) may be easily attached and detached from the cutting tool (18) by simply grasping with one's fingers the contact holder (12) provided on and around the neck section (10A) and sliding the holder (12) with respect to the neck section (10A). No precise manipulation of the device is required.

With the above feature (B), operation of the root canal length measuring device is readily facilitated by making the lead (32) detachable with respect to the contact holder (12) and thus to the contact (11). Specifically, the supply of electricity to the contact (11) may be immediately switched on and off easily at hand by detachable lead (32), so that the operation safety is improved with a simple structure and assembly.

The Examiner points out that the contact holder (12) of the present invention is disclosed in Nakayama, and more specifically, points to column 6, lines 59-62 of Nakayama, which describes the embodiment shown in Figs. 7A and 7B of Nakayama. The invention disclosed in Figs. 7A and 7B of Nakayama, however, discloses a contact piece (6), which corresponds to the contact (11) of the present invention. The contact piece (6) of Nakayama is supported in the guide portion (6g), which is formed on the lower surface of the housing (3c) and is slidable therein by pushing the inclined portion (6l) on the contact piece (6). The guide portion (6g) of Nakayama, which corresponds to the contact holder (12) of the present invention is not axially slidable and is not provided around the neck section as required by claims 1 and 6. Rather, it is the contact piece (6) itself that is slidable within the guide portion (6g); not the contact holder (12) as in the present invention. Thus, features (A) and (C) of the present invention are not taught by Nakayama. The contact piece (6) of Nakayama cannot be attached or detached from the cutting tool (5) by grasping the guide portion (6g) with one's fingers, but must be operated by pushing the small contact piece (6) on the small, limited inclined portion (6l). This action requires precise manipulation and care.

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Furthermore, no lead is made detachable with respect to the guide portion (6g).

Thus the above feature is not taught by Nakayama, the supply of electricity to the contact (11) is always maintained, and cannot be readily switched at hand.

Since the patentable features (A) to (C) are not disclosed or suggested by Nakayama, Applicants respectfully submit that, the present invention is novel and nonobvious in view thereof.

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection should be reversed.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, which action is courteously requested. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including Extension of Time fees to Deposit Account No. 141437. Please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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